



PROGRAM STAFF



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Resources are linked in the manual or can be accessed in the [FCRB Policy & Procedures Resources](#) folder.

Introduction

The Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) provides an essential service for Iowa children who are removed from their homes and placed in foster care. Under Iowa Code Chapter 237, the FCRB is required to review all cases referred to it to determine if satisfactory progress is being made toward the goals of the child's permanency plan. Summarizing the requirements of Iowa law, this involves a thoughtful and thorough process that includes reviewing:

- 1) Past, current and future status of the child as shown in the case plan itself and through review of case progress reports and other reports the board requires for a thorough review.
- 2) The efforts of the placing agency to locate and provide services to the **child's biological or adoptive parents, legal guardians, or fictive kin providing the majority of a child's daily food, lodging, and support.**
- 3) The efforts of HHS and the placing agency to facilitate reunification or find a suitable alternative placement if reunion is not feasible.
- 4) And investigating any other problems, solutions or alternatives which may affect the best interests of the child.
- 5) Compliance of all interested parties with the requirements of the case plan. This includes the parents and child involved, along with all service providers whether they contract directly with HHS or are collateral resources from the community that are involved in serving the child and family.

All of the factors listed above have an important bearing on the child's hope for a permanent home that is both safe and successful for the long term. A major focus of the training provided by the Iowa Child Advocacy Board (ICAB) for the dedicated volunteers who step forward to serve as local board members is on how to carry out the five review requirements listed above. The facilitator trained to assist in conducting its review has experience, knowledge and insight that are available to the FCRB to help ensure that each review requirement is accomplished as thoughtfully and thoroughly as possible and in a way that meets the best interests of the child.

In addition to meeting the requirements of Iowa law, the reviews meet federal requirements for a foster care administrative review system. This enables ICAB to draw federal Title IV-E funds to assist in funding the review process. Therefore, accomplishing the review in the manner prescribed in this Policy and Procedures Manual, fully using the assistance of the facilitator and ICAB staff is important to the financial viability of the program.

Section 1: Program Overview

Purpose

This section provides an overview of the Iowa Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) Program as it relates to the mission, purpose, oversight, and affiliations.

Affected Persons

Iowa Child Advocacy Board staff, contract facilitators, and local board members.

1.A. Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding

Policy: Within 15 calendar days of issuance of this manual or subsequent revisions, all staff and contractors who administer, facilitate and support Foster Care Review Boards and all local board members are required to review the material and sign a Letter of Acknowledgement. Program staff will upload the signed letter to the local board member's electronic volunteer file in the Child Advocacy Match System (CAMS). Staff and facilitators send/submit acknowledgement letters to the immediate supervisor.

1.B. Mission and Purpose of the Iowa FCRB Program

Policy: All staff, contract facilitators, and local board members must conduct themselves in a manner that carries out the mission and purpose of the FCRB program.

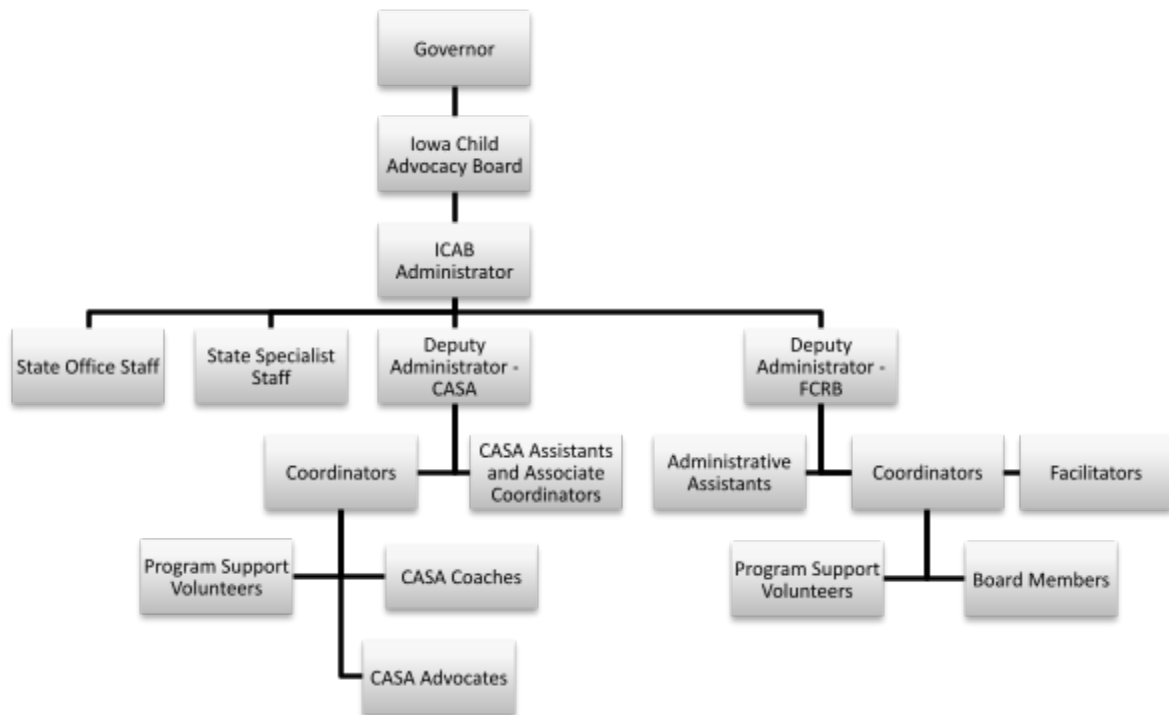
- 1) Mission: The Iowa Foster Care Review Board empowers the citizens of Iowa to review cases, collect data, and recommend changes to promote the safety and permanency of children who have been removed from the homes of their families.
- 2) The ICAB establishes local FCRBs to review cases of children receiving foster care and issues related to each child's case permanency plan. A current FCRB program coverage map is available upon request.
- 3) The child population served by the Iowa FCRB program includes each child receiving foster care within the specific case types included in the protocol developed between ICAB and HHS. The timing and frequency of a review of each case also considers the permanency goals, placement setting and frequency of any court reviews of the case. The protocol may include a child, as defined in Iowa Code Section 237.15 who is described by any of the following:
 - a) The child's foster care placement is the financial responsibility of the state pursuant to section 234.35.
 - b) The child is under the guardianship of the department (of human services).
 - c) The child has been involuntarily hospitalized for mental illness pursuant to chapter 229.

- d) The child is at-risk of being placed outside the child's home, the department or court is providing or planning to provide services to the child and the department or court has requested the involvement of the state or local board.
- 3) The Iowa FCRB program selects **and trains** qualified community individuals to serve as local board members.

1.C. Program Oversight

Policy: The Iowa Child Advocacy Board maintains a structure for communication, implementation, and monitoring to manage the policies and rules of the FCRB program.

The Foster Care Review Board Program is governed by the Iowa Child Advocacy Board (ICAB) and managed and guided by the state office. Coordinators, contract facilitators, and administrative assistants manage and support the work of the Foster Care Review Boards (FCRBs). This chart depicts the organizational structure.



Following is a summary of the roles of each of these players in the FCRB Program and process along with the role of the FCRBs.

- 1) **Iowa Child Advocacy Board (ICAB).** The state board is a nine-member volunteer board appointed by the Governor. This board establishes policy through adoption of administrative rules and provides oversight to both the Court Appointed Special Advocate program and the Foster Care Review Board program. The state board hires and supervises the ICAB administrator. This board is responsible for gathering and

evaluating administrative data on **children served by the ICAB volunteer programs** and reporting the data to the Governor, legislature, the state court administrator, the Department of Health and Human Services and child placing agencies. **ICAB is responsible for maintaining a registry of children in foster care and are stored in ICAB's data management system.**

The state board makes recommendations to the Governor, legislature, state court administrator, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and child-placing agencies on systemic problems in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, specific proposals for improvements that assist the systems in being more cost-effective and better able to protect the best interests of children, and necessary changes relating to the administrative data it collects.

- 2) **Program Administrator.** The administrator supports the state board in its efforts to develop and monitor strategic vision, mission, goals and objectives for the FCRB program and FCRB program policy. With this direction from the state board, the administrator develops and manages operational plans to carry out the state board's approved policies and strategies for achieving program goals and objectives. This includes management of program design, operational procedures, budget planning and spending, organizational design, personnel administration, training, automated system support for the program, and program measurement and evaluation. The administrator directly supervises members of the state office to provide maximum support for the FCRB program within available resources limits.
- 3) **Deputy Program Administrator.** The deputy administrator is the direct formal supervisor of assigned coordinators and administrative support staff in the field and ensures program operations comply with policy and are directed as effectively as possible to achieve the state board's target program performance and outcome goals and objectives. With this knowledge of field operations, the deputy provides consultation to the administrator on development of policy, budget, training, organizational design, personnel administration, and automated system development and operation. The deputy administrator also guides and directs field staff in the use of measurements and metrics in a manner that increases performance and outcomes. The deputy administrator manages implementation of the ICAB strategic plan including the portions of the plan addressing FCRB program goals and objectives. This includes leading other members of the state office in developing operational plans, indicators of success in achieving program goals and objectives, collection and analysis of data related to the program progress and success and preparation of reports to policy makers highlighting progress. The deputy administrator also develops FCRB operational policies and procedures and guides development of training, automation, program improvements, and acts as the lead worker for the operational work of the administrative support staff and manages independent contracts for facilitators. The deputy serves as acting administrator in the absence of the administrator.
- 4) **Training Specialist.** This specialist designs and coordinates development and delivery of pre-service and continuing education of local board members and staff throughout the state. This includes leading ICAB's Training Committee which has responsibility for identifying and prioritizing FCRB training needs, identifying coordinators and administrative support staff who will be responsible for leading training development and

delivery in each key area of subject matter, coaching staff on elements and methods of training design and delivery, and providing training of trainers/facilitators to develop the training skills of all staff.

- 5) **Coordinator.** A coordinator provides overall coordination and management of the FCRB program in each county or cluster of counties where a Foster Care Review Board is assigned. The coordinator carries out plans to recruit, train, supervise and retain local board members; collaborate with judges, HHS workers and others involved in the community's child welfare and juvenile justice systems; increasing local board diversity and cultural competence; overseeing FCRB and processes to ensure a high degree of quality.
- 6) **Foster Care Review Board Facilitator.** A facilitator is assigned to each local board to assist with the review process; document the discussion, findings and recommendations of the board; and prepare the board's report to the court. The facilitator helps ensure that all considerations in each case are fully covered and that the board's reports to the court are of high quality. The facilitator keeps the coordinator fully apprised of the board's work, communicating, in particular, any requests or issues the board needs the coordinator to consider.
- 7) **State Office Administrative Assistant (AA).** This position aids ICAB by completing local board member background checks, supply orders, billings/invoices, and support for the ICAB state board. The state office AA provides website management/updates, and assists with the ICAB's newsletter.
- 8) **Administrative Assistant.** The administrative assistant (AA) identifies and schedules the foster care cases that need to be reviewed for each meeting, in accordance with the protocol established for the FCRB. The AA notifies the HHS case manager and all interested parties of the scheduled review time for each case, ensures that each local board member has complete and updated information for the review, and collects any physical records for safeguarding upon completion of each review. The AA enters case and demographic data in ICAB's program data systems. AAs also handle any special requests about case reviews from local board members, facilitators, coordinators, case managers and other interested parties.
- 9) **Foster Care Review Board Members.** Upon completion of pre-service training, approval by the child advocacy board **staff** and execution of an Oath of Confidentiality, the local board member begins participation on the local board at its next meeting. The board's responsibilities are to review the case of each child receiving foster care assigned to the local board to determine whether parties make satisfactory progress toward the goals of the case permanency plan. The board operates in accordance with several specific requirements for the review process established in Iowa law. Once all information is gathered, the board works with the FCRB facilitator to develop the **case narratives**, findings, **barriers**, and recommendations that will be included in the board's report to the court.

Section 2: Ethical Conduct

Purpose

This Code of Ethics provides local board members and staff with guidelines for professional behavior and ethical conduct. Local board members and staff shall abide by this Code of Ethics and all laws and regulations governing their activities.

Affected Persons

Iowa Child Advocacy Board staff, contract facilitators, and local board members

2.A. General Ethical Conduct Policy

Policy

Local board members and staff shall uphold the credibility and dignity of the program by conducting all business in an honest, fair, professional and humane manner.

- Local board members and staff shall not use their authority inappropriately, nor condone any illegal act or unethical practice related to the program or community.
- Employees, local board members and state board members shall immediately notify the ICAB office of any criminal charges filed against them **or pending investigations.**
- Local board members and staff shall not use the FCRB program to promote personal gain through the inappropriate use of goods/materials, confidential information or by abuse of their position.
- Local board members and staff shall avoid any action that could adversely affect the confidence of the public in the integrity of the program.

2.B. Conflict of Interest Policy Related to FCRB Membership

Definition

Conflict of Interest: When a local board member or staff is in a situation where their professional, personal involvement or private interest could lead to the disregard or appearance of disregard of the responsibility to discharge an official public duty in an objective and fair-handed manner.

Policy

Local board members, contract facilitators, and staff shall not engage in any activity that might create a conflict with their position with the board.

Procedure

- 1) Local board members and staff shall handle conflicts of interests related to their positions associated with local board as follows:
 - a) Any person with a possible conflict of interest with the FCRB reports the conflict immediately to the coordinator (Staff supervisor if the coordinator is the person with

the conflict). The individual will resolve the conflict to the satisfaction of the coordinator (Supervisor if the coordinator is the person with the conflict) or resign from the position.

- If the conflict is limited to a particular family or interested party, the local board member can still serve on the board but will need to recuse themselves from any review where there is a conflict of interest.
- b) If the local board member, staff member or facilitator does not 1) report the conflict or 2) fails to resolve the conflict or resign the position upon reporting the conflict, the coordinator shall report the conflict immediately to the area supervisor and administrator for resolution.
- c) If any local board member, staff member or facilitator fails to disclose a potential conflict of interest prior to becoming involved in a transaction or decision affected by the conflict, appropriate discipline or dismissal will be implemented.

2.C. Non-Discrimination Policy

Policy

The FCRB program is an equal opportunity organization that will not allow discrimination based upon age, ethnicity, ancestry, gender, gender expression, national origin, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, social economic background, or any other status prohibited by applicable law.

- The local board members and staff complete training in the operations of the court, child welfare systems, and in the dynamics of child abuse and neglect.
- The local board members and staff must respect a child's inherent right to grow up with dignity in a safe environment that meets the child's best interest, first and foremost with a biological parent if the parent is able to provide a minimum sufficient level of care to the child.
- Foster care reviews are conducted without bias.

2.D. Confidentiality Policy

Policy

Staff, contract facilitators and board members must adhere to Iowa Code 237.21 and protect the confidential information provided for foster care review board meetings and the information shared during reviews.

Pursuant to 237.21, there will be no audio or video recordings of foster care review board meetings as local boards are not subject to chapter 21, Open Meetings. Therefore, all foster care review board meetings are closed sessions, not open to the public. ICAB has a duty and responsibility to protect the confidentiality of children receiving foster care and the child's family.

Section 3: Public Communication and Relations

Purpose

Iowa Child Advocacy Board staff will maintain a proactive working relationship with judges, attorneys, HHS, service providers and other parties involved in cases, as well as maintain a positive community presence. Public support is a significant factor in maintaining program credibility and sustainability.

Affected Persons

Iowa Child Advocacy Board staff, contract facilitators, and local board members

3.A. Public Communication Strategy

Policy

Iowa Child Advocacy Board staff actively engage in partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, enhance relationships among partners, and serve as a catalyst for changing policies, programs and practices.

Procedure

Iowa Child Advocacy Board staff are responsible for conveying information about the FCRB program to the public in their assigned areas. They carry out an ongoing program of public information and education that promotes an understanding of the program's purpose, function and place in judicial proceedings and the child welfare system. The ongoing program includes the following features.

- 1) At least annually, the coordinator shall assess the FCRB's working relationship for the counties involved with local judges, county attorneys, children's lawyers and GALs, HHS and contract service providers.
 - a) The assessment process shall include personal contact with each of these system partners.
 - b) Based on the assessment, the coordinators shall develop a plan that builds upon the FCRB's successes in advocating for children and addresses any areas needing improvement.
- 2) The FCRB program's role, functions and capacities are shared with other agencies, community organizations, governmental bodies and corporations as appropriate. Coordinators shall perform public speaking engagements in accordance with the public communications strategy.
- 3) The FCRB program works closely with representatives from the legal and social services communities, other child advocacy programs, community service and civic groups as well as with businesses to accomplish its purposes and to foster interagency collaboration and coordination of services. Coordinators are encouraged to participate in child welfare collaborations within their communities.

3.B. Crisis Management Policy

Policy

ICAB management supervises all FCRB staff. Staff members shall immediately report to the administrator and deputy administrator concerns, questions and information that might have a significant impact on the program's credibility, reputation or funding. Crisis examples may include failure to adhere to program policy resulting in harm to a child, or media providing negative information about the work of the program.

Procedure

- 1) The leadership team members involved will assess situations with gathered facts, and inform as appropriate other key contacts (e.g. ICAB Chair; Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA); Iowa Governor's Office; the court, other state agencies) about the developments involving the FCRB program and the potential significant negative impact on program goals or operations.
- 2) If a crisis arises at a state level that would affect a particular program, the administrator or deputy administrator shall inform the affected coordinator(s) of the situation.
- 3) Direct legal and media issues to the appropriate state-level personnel. Written responses will be prepared and released in a clear, concise manner with the guidance of DIA/Iowa Governor's Office.
- 4) Local ICAB staff members shall address the crisis intervention needs of local board members. Initial contact is made within 72 hours of the reported incident or concern.
- 5) ICAB Management addresses staff needs on an individual basis, in consultation with the affected person(s). Initial contact is made within 72 hours of the reported incident or concern.

3.C. Stakeholder, Media and Legislative Contact Policy

Policy

Local boards members and staff shall not comment on any case to the media or legislators and shall not discuss information about cases with the media or arrange for interviews of children or parents, regardless of their consent. The FCRB program does not exploit children and families to receive media attention. The policy of ICAB and the DIA is to ensure that employees, in the conduct of official state business, represent the official position of ICAB when having contact with stakeholders, legislators and members of Congress and their staff.

Procedure

- 1) If contacted by the media or a legislator regarding a case or the FCRB program, local board members shall contact the coordinator, and the coordinator shall contact the administrator or deputy administrator as needed. Local board members may participate in providing the response, if deemed appropriate, through consultation between the coordinator and administration. If the media or a legislator interviews a local board

member, the coordinator shall be present to assist in clarifying any policy and practice points needed to ensure accurate understanding.

- 2) If staff knows of an article appearing about the FCRB program, the staff member shall send a copy of the article to the administrator and deputy administrator.
- 3) Legislative or congressional staff includes caucus staff, secretaries to legislators, legislative service or fiscal staff, or any other person calling on behalf of a state legislator or of Congress. If a state legislator or member of Congress or their staff contact coordinators and an accurate answer is available, provide the answer to the person immediately and then notify the administrator or deputy administrator of the contact and response. If the question or request requires further research or written reply, contact the administrator or deputy administrator immediately for further direction.
- 4) As a local board, any contact with state officials, stakeholders, legislators, members of Congress or their staff must be vetted by the coordinator. Coordinators will assess the situation, consult with administration, and work with the board to determine the best course of action. Any written communication from a local review board or local board member, in the member's capacity as a board member, to state officials or media shall be sent to the child advocacy board office and reviewed by the administrator prior to its release. (Iowa Administrative Rule 489, 3.1(3))
- 5) The policy does not restrict a local board member's or employee's rights as a private citizen or constituent to contact state officials, legislators, members of Congress or their staff to express his or her personal views on an issue. Employees may not make personal legislative advocacy contacts on work time.

3.D. Social Media Policy

Policy

ICAB staff, contract facilitators and local board members are responsible for adhering to the social media policy which sets parameters for acceptable use.

Resource

- Social Media Policy

Section 4: Promoting Cultural Competence

Purpose

Iowa Child Advocacy Board is committed to ensuring an equitable and fair outcome for *all* children. Local board members and program staff strive to increase their understanding of cultural differences and to develop competence in working with children and families with cultural backgrounds different from their own. Local board members and staff strive to understand the impact of racial and ethnic differences that may contribute to the disproportionate representation of children and families of color in the child welfare system.

Affected Persons

Iowa Child Advocacy Board staff, contract facilitators and local board members

4.A. Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility

Policy

ICAB staff, including contract facilitators, and local board members shall apply cultural competence in every aspect of professional conduct and foster care review practices.

Procedure

- 1) Using training resources and other learning opportunities, all staff and local board members are expected to develop:
 - a) A sense of cultural humility, that is, the ability to maintain an approach in interpersonal relationships that is open to the aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the children and families served by the FCRB program
 - b) Increased individual and team cultural competence, that is, a set of principles, behaviors and practices that, together, enable the FCRB program to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

4.B. Community Partnerships

Policy

Staff shall identify and promote opportunities for local board members to collaborate with child welfare providers and court representatives to increase cultural humility and cultural competence in a manner that helps identify and address the root causes of disproportionality in child welfare and justice systems.

4.C. Recruitment for Diversity

Policy

Coordinators shall establish written local board member recruitment plans which demonstrate that inclusiveness and diversity are essential components of quality advocacy and include targeted strategies to attract local board members from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Pursuant to Iowa Code §237.19, subsection 2, the members of each local board shall, to the extent possible, reflect the various racial and ethnic groups and various occupations of their district.

Section 5: FCRB Member Recruitment, Selection, Training and Retention

Purpose

The FCRB program is inclusive and committed to establishing a volunteer pool that represents a cross section of the professional, personal and cultural backgrounds needed to understand and advocate effectively for the permanency needs of children served by each FCRB.

Affected Persons

Iowa Child Advocacy Board staff and local board members

5.A. Recruitment Plan: Professional, Personal and Cultural Diversity

Policy

Each coordinator has a written plan for recruiting and selecting local board members who represent a cross section of the professional, personal and cultural backgrounds needed to understand and advocate effectively for the permanency needs of children served by each FCRB. The recruitment plan document describes how professional and cultural inclusiveness and diversity are essential components of quality advocacy. It includes targeted strategies to attract members from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, gender, professional and personal backgrounds, and a variety of age groups and socio-economic levels.

Procedure

- 1) Coordinators shall, in consultation with a supervisor, review and revise FCRB recruitment plans for a one year period.
- 2) The staff may use a variety of recruitment methods to meet the goals set forth in the recruitment plans.

Resource

- Recruitment Plan Template

5.B. Recruiting Local Board Members

Policy

Implement recruitment activities when a board vacancy occurs or a new foster care review board is established.

Procedure

- 1) The coordinator personally contacts potential candidates who meet the recruitment criteria for the vacancy to explain the program, the attributes needed in the person selected to fill the vacancy, and answer questions about this volunteer commitment.
- 2) Enter all inquiries into ICAB's online data system.

- a) In the Volunteer Inquiry modal, enter all required information and any additional information received from the interested individual.
 - b) The coordinator is required to make and document a minimum of three contacts/attempts with each inquiry within 60 days of the first contact (if the person has not applied in those 60 days). Enter all contact dates, methods, and notes in the Volunteer Inquiry modal.
 - c) See the CAMS User Guide: Inquiry for how to track and process inquiries in the data system.
- 3) If interest continues following the contact, the coordinator will direct the potential candidate to the CAMS online application URL to complete an online application. The coordinator may also email the potential candidate:
- a) Iowa FCRB Program Fact Sheet
 - b) Local Board Member Job Description
- 4) The coordinator may also provide a standardized packet of information if requested by the inquiry. The packet may be provided during an in-person meeting or sent by regular mail or email. The packet includes:
- a) Recruitment Cover letter
 - b) Application - *only use if the candidate is not able to complete an online application. Make a copy from the resource folder. Change the permissions to Editor to allow for the individual to complete the application via computer.*
 - c) Iowa FCRB Program Fact Sheet
 - d) Local Board Member Job Description
- 5) If the potential candidate expresses interest in applying for the vacant FCRB position, the coordinator will instruct the candidate to apply online in ICAB's data system. Once the application is received, the coordinator will schedule and conduct an **in-person** interview with the candidate. See 5.C. Screening Process for further instruction about the interview process.
- a) Background check consent forms must be signed at the interview.
 - b) The applicant must also sign a confidentiality agreement to observe a local board in action prior to attending; **best practice is to obtain the signature at the interview.**
- 6) The coordinator arranges for a potential candidate to visit a FCRB meeting with the expectation to observe the process for several reviews and interact with the local board members between reviews or during scheduled breaks. Observation of a local board should occur during the Orientation module as a step in the pre-service training process.

- a) Coordinator or designee enters the date of observation in the candidate's volunteer digital record and uploads the signed confidentiality agreement to the Documents section.
- b) Observation of a local board can be waived if the candidate *has previously participated in a foster care review as a*:
 - i.) Former Board Member or Facilitator
 - ii.) CASA Advocate / Coach
 - iii.) Former HHS worker or provider or other interested party
 - iv.) Former Foster Parent (licensed foster parents cannot serve on a board)
- c) Coordinator enters a note in the candidate's digital records noting why the observation was waived.

Resources: CAMS User Guide: Inquiry Modal, Recruitment Cover Letter, Application, Iowa Program Fact Sheet, Local Board Member Job Description, Confidentiality Agreement (observation)

5.C. Onboarding and Initial Screening

Each board consists of **a minimum of** five members and **a maximum of seven** members to serve on each local board. (Iowa Code §237.19). For boards reviewing youth from a cluster of counties, the expectation will be for the board membership to reflect residency from various counties represented. Local board members are expected to attend board meetings and be prepared to share the duties.

The following persons are not eligible to serve on a local board:

- Employees of ICAB, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the District Court, an agency providing services to HHS for children under foster care.
- A foster parent providing care.
- Persons who would be screened out through records checks.

Policy

All applicants shall complete a formal interview, submit references and complete background checks as part of the screening process for local board members.

- Prior board members or facilitators who left the program one or more years ago must complete all onboarding, to include having current background checks on file, pre-service training requirements, **and be sworn in** prior to serving a **four**-year term on a local board.

Procedure

- 1) Completing the FCRB interview:
 - a) The coordinator will schedule a time to meet with each interested applicant to conduct an **in-person** interview.

- b) The interview process is a way for the coordinator to meet face to face with the applicant and get to know more about the individual, the person's qualifications and the match between those qualifications and the needs identified in the FCRB Recruitment Plan established [pursuant to Section 5.a.] The Interview Guide & Questionnaire provides a guide for conducting the interview and documenting the information obtained and uploading the completed form to ICAB's data system.
- 2) Background checks: Upon completion of the interview, the coordinator will explain the next steps and ask the applicant to complete and sign the back-ground check releases, as follows:
- Child Abuse Registry (HHS Child Abuse Check)
 - Iowa Child Advocacy Board Form which covers:
 - o Sex Offender Registry Check
 - o Iowa Criminal Record Check with DCI
 - o National Criminal Record Check
- a) The coordinator will provide signed forms to the state office administrative assistant for processing. Complete background checks prior to the individual being sworn in as a board member.
- b) Screening based on records checks
- i) Staff do not accept applicants who refuse to sign required background check releases.
 - ii) Any applicant found to have been convicted of, or having charges pending for, a felony or misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect or related acts that would pose a risk to children or to program credibility is not accepted as a local board member.
 - iii) Staff do not accept an applicant with a documented criminal domestic abuse, child physical abuse offense or sexual abuse documented on the abuse registry.
 - iv) The administrator may make an exception for an applicant with convictions for other types of misdemeanors or felonies that would not pose a risk to children or program credibility.
 - v) Coordinators may request an exception from the administrator if an applicant has a negative background check finding. The administrator will consider the extent of the rehabilitation since the misdemeanor or felony was committed, as well as any other factors that may be necessary to determine the acceptance of the applicant. Consult the CAMS Staff User Guide for how to process a request for exemption in the data system.

3) Personal Reference Checks

- a) Using the application dashboard > references modal in ICAB's data system, the coordinator will send a character reference form to the three (3) references provided by the applicant, all of whom are unrelated to the applicant.
- b) Document reference checks in ICAB's data system; upload completed references to the application processing modal.
- c) Each applicant needs three (3) completed references on file to meet ICAB requirements.
- d) The coordinator reviews the references as part of the screening process for the applicant. The coordinator may also contact HHS supervisors regarding the names of any applicants. HHS may be aware of potential conflicts of interest with some applicants. The coordinator considers the information when screening the applicant and addresses any potential concerns before making a final determination to accept the applicant.

4) Applicant Approval

- a) Prior to pre-service training, the coordinator will contact the supervisor to discuss approval of the applicant. Together, with the supervisor, they will:
 - Review the application.
 - Review the current local board composition to monitor for a diverse board that, as reasonably possible, reflects the population of the county where the individual will serve.
- b) The Supervisor will document a note in CAMS on the candidate's facesheet indicating whether the candidate is approved to continue with the onboarding process.
- c) If the person is not approved to continue, a letter will be sent to the applicant and the person will be withdrawn from the FCRB program in ICAB's data system.
- d) All onboarding, screening and pre-service training requirements must be completed before a new board member is sworn in to serve.
 - Formal application in CAMS.
 - Documented interview; uploaded to CAMS. *Must be the **FCRB Interview and Questionnaire Guide** found in the resource folder. The CASA interview form is not acceptable to meet the interview requirement for FCRB.*
 - Three references; uploaded to CAMS.
 - Application is processed and the individual is in training status to continue.
 - Background checks completed satisfactorily.
 - Board observation confidentiality agreement is in the volunteer record.
 - All pre-service requirements are met satisfactorily.

Resources: Interview Guide & Questionnaire, HHS Child Abuse Check form, Iowa Child Advocacy Board Consent form, CAMS Staff User Guide

5.D. Board Member Progress Reviews

Each board member must complete a collaborative progress review when their term is set to expire. This helps the board member and the coordinator assess the work of the volunteer and determine whether the volunteer will seek reappointment.

Procedure:

- 1) The Administrative Assistant will prepare and share the current FCRB member progress review template with the volunteer and coordinator to complete the review. This occurs at least one month prior to the end of the volunteer's term.
- 2) The coordinator will complete the progress evaluation by:
 - a) Adding feedback for the board member as indicated on the FCRB member progress review template.
 - b) Providing an electronic or original signature and dating the progress review document.
 - c) Discussing the review with the board member and providing a copy of the completed document to the board member.
 - d) Uploading the document to the board member's digital record and updating the due date for the next progress review (four years out).

5.E. Vacancies, Leaves of Absence, Exits, and Reappointments

The term of a local board member's appointment shall not exceed four years. The local office shall stagger the individual appointments so that no more than one-third of the membership's terms expire in a given year.

As noted in 5.C., the following persons are not eligible to serve on a local board:

- Employees of ICAB, HHS, the District Court, an agency providing services to HHS for children under foster care.
- A foster parent providing care.
- Persons who would be screened out through records checks.

Policy

Each board consists of a minimum of five members and a maximum of seven members to serve on each local board. (Iowa Code §237.19). Local board members are expected to attend board meetings and be prepared to share the duties.

Procedure

- 1) Vacancies on a local board shall be filled by recruiting and onboarding applicants with consideration given to board composition expectations.
 - a) For boards reviewing youth from a cluster of counties, the expectation will be for the board membership to reflect residency from various counties represented.

- b) When a vacancy occurs, the coordinator will review the remaining local board composition and specifically recruit to fulfill the expectations for residency, diversity, etc.
- c) Follow 5.C. Initial Onboarding and Screening once an eligible candidate meets the criteria to serve.

2) Leaves of Absence

- a) A leave of absence should only be accepted for short term needs such as: health issues, job change, needing to take care of an ill family member, etc. In these instances, the volunteer plans to return to active participation on the board.
- b) A leave of absence should not be designated when a volunteer wants to resign from the board and has no intention of returning.
- c) A leave of absence does not equate to becoming a FCRB Substitute who only attends a review day if needed, as the person will not be up to date on changes to the child welfare system or the review process if they do not regularly participate in reviews. Board members will need to make a decision to take a leave of absence or exit the program.
- d) Board members who take a leave of absence (two year maximum leave) during a term may return to complete the four-year term without any additional screening if there is an opening on the board; coordinators can determine the need for refresher training based on the length of the leave.
- e) A leave of absence does not guarantee there will be an opening on the board for the volunteer to return to. If quorum issues arise, the coordinator will need to fill the spots left open by volunteers with an on leave status.
- f) If the volunteer is still on leave at the end of their term, they must either:
 - i.) Seek reappointment, or
 - ii.) Be exited from the program if they are not able to return to the board

3) Exits

- a) ICAB staff will discharge local board members in the ICAB data system within one week of when the person resigns or is discharged from the program. A written resignation must be provided and uploaded to the volunteer record.
- b) Board members who resign from a local board but return within one year of leaving, may return when approved by the coordinator in consultation with the supervisor, without any additional screening or pre-service training and complete their four-year term.
- c) Board members exited for more than one year who want to return to the board must complete the onboarding process and pre-service training requirements before being sworn in to serve.

- 4) Reappointments. The following will occur when a board member's term is set to expire:
- a) Progress review is completed as outlined in 5.D.
 - b) If the board member is seeking reappointment, the coordinator will:
 - i.) provide the name of the board member to their immediate supervisor via email or during a supervisory meeting; provide reason(s) for supporting the reappointment; and
 - ii.) check the status of the board member's background checks. If they are expired, contact the state office administrative assistant to check on the status of the background checks.
 - c) Supervisor will make a note in the volunteer's electronic record about the approval for reappointment or declination.

5.F. Member Training Requirements

Policy

Local Board Members who serve on a FCRB shall successfully complete all pre-service training requirements as outlined by the FCRB Program. In addition to pre-service training requirements, each Member will complete 6 hours of ongoing training each year, prorated to their start date during the first year of service.

Procedure

- 1) Pre-Service Training: Prior to being sworn in, the applicant shall schedule and complete pre-service training requirements with the coordinator. **Coordinators will deliver the state office approved training curriculum to all new volunteers.**
 - a) The coordinator delivers the individualized training locally.
 - b) In the event that the prospective applicant is required to travel more than 50 miles for training, the person may claim mileage for the travel. To do so, the applicant will complete a W-9 Form and a Travel Claim Form and submit it to the coordinator who will forward it to the state office.

Consult the Iowa Department of Administrative Services [website](#) for reimbursement rates. For additional information on receipts, view the [Meal Receipt FAQ](#).

2) Continuing Education

- a) A local board member shall complete a minimum of 6 hours of continuing education annually, prorated for the member's start date during the year. The training includes a required session on securing and maintaining confidential information.

When sworn in:

MONTHS	HOURS NEEDED IN CALENDAR YEAR
January or February	5
March or April	4
May or June	3
July or August	2
September or October	1
November or December	0

Number of prorated hours is based on the number of continuing education hours that will be provided to the local boards during the remainder of the calendar year.

- b) The administrative assistant (AA) sets up the continuous education classes for each local board in CAMS and tracks volunteer completion for each class.
- i) All board members in attendance at the review day when training is delivered are given completion credit in CAMS.
 - ii) Absent board members who complete a worksheet are given full credit for completing the training as an independent study.
- c) Opportunities for "Coordinator Choice" will be built into each calendar year; the number of "Coordinator Choice" sessions will depend on the other topics scheduled for continuous education of board members.
- d) When "Coordinator Choice" is on the continuous education schedule, the coordinator is responsible for providing 60 minutes of training. Options include:
- i) Secure a speaker to present to the board members on a topic selected by the coordinator; confirm the speaker's attendance at least one day prior to the board meeting; or
 - ii) Provide materials on a selected topic to the administrative assistant (AA) at least two weeks prior to the board meeting. The material should include a Facilitator Guide if the contract facilitator is expected to deliver the materials. Format is typically a 30 minute pre-reading document and then 30 minutes of application during the board meeting day; or
 - iii) Provide an independent study on a selected topic which includes learning objectives.

- e) When “Coordinator Choice” is on the continuing education schedule, the AA will:
 - i.) Consult with the coordinator to determine how much training time needs to be included in the agenda.
 - ii.) Secure any handouts or materials from the coordinator at least two weeks prior to the board meeting day; provide copies to the facilitator and board members.
 - iii.) Set up a class in ICAB’s data system using Coordinator Choice as the Topic and selecting the appropriate match for the Title for the training.
 - iv.) Process training completion for FCRB members and enter any evaluations in ICAB’s data system.
- 3) The coordinator or designee will document all pre-service training and continuing education completion in ICAB’s data system for each local board member.
 - a) Pre-service training classes are entered and outcomes are tracked in ICAB’s data system to include the initial security awareness training.
 - b) Pre-service evaluations must be entered into ICAB’s data system.
 - c) Administrative assistants will enter all continuing education classes in ICAB’s data system for local boards and track training completion for each local board member. Utilize the board member hours/miles sheet to track attendance at the local board meeting to determine which board members received training during the review day.
 - d) Administrative assistants will enter all training evaluations in ICAB’s data system that are provided by local board members. Evaluations are entered through the Training Evaluations Dashboard. Any evaluation that is not entered within 30 days of the completion date will become available for data entry.

Resources: W-9 Form and Travel Claim Form

5.G. Swearing-In Ceremony

Policy

A local judge or designee administers an Oath of Confidentiality with all individuals who have successfully completed the onboarding process **which includes: formal application, three references on file, completed interview, all pre-service training requirements documented in the data system and all background checks cleared and entered in the data system.** The Oath of Confidentiality signifies the individual becoming a local board member and must be executed before the start of the volunteer’s term.

(Note: This policy language clarification (added in July 2021) is significant because ICAB staff is not able to share or provide confidential case information with individuals who are not local board members pursuant to Iowa Code §237.21.)

Procedure

- 1) The prospective local board member shall read the Iowa Code sections in preparation to take the Statement of Confidentiality Oath; the presiding juvenile court judge or designee administers the oath prior to start of the board member's service on a local foster care review board.
- 2) The coordinator shall schedule a time with the judge for the appointment ceremony; making sure the prospective local board member is available. In some areas of the state, coordinators may be able to arrange for the local judge to attend the final training session and swear in all the volunteers at one time. Introduce the judge and volunteer(s). Documents needed are:
 - a) Oath for the volunteer and judge to sign.
 - b) Certificate for the judge to sign. Certificates are obtained from the state office.
- 3) The judge or designee conducts an appointment ceremony using the Statement of Confidentiality Oath. Seek permission from the judge and volunteer before taking any photographs. Photographs can be used to recognize the new volunteer and promote the program in local newspapers or via social media.
- 4) The coordinator stores a copy of the oath in the local board member's electronic record in ICAB's data system; give the original oath to the local board member.

Resources: Iowa Code Sections (for Oath) and Statement of Confidentiality Oath

5.H. Member Retention and Recognition

Policy

Coordinators shall maintain a personal, yet professional relationship that recognizes and rewards the good work of local board members.

Procedure

- 1) Coordinators shall establish informal and formal practices for recognizing local board members and rewarding good work.
- 2) Local board members approve or deny permission to take and print their photographs online and in ICAB publications by completing the P&P Acknowledgement form. If ICAB seeks to use the photographs for any other purpose, staff requests specific permission for that purpose.
- 3) The administrator shall develop a local board member evaluation process. The coordinator shall complete the evaluation process at least one time for each local board member during the individual's **four**-year term. The coordinator shall consider the results of the evaluation when determining whether to seek appointment of the local board member to a successive term. When seeking reappointment, the coordinator:

- a) Consults with their direct supervisor, providing a rationale for reappointing the local board member. The supervisor will document approval or disapproval in the local board member's CAMS record.
 - If not approved, the coordinator will send a letter of gratitude to the board member for their years of service and notify them that their term has ended. Exit the board member in CAMS. Notify the administrative assistant.
- b) Checks the volunteer record to ensure that current background checks are on file. If background checks are not current, contact the state office administrative assistant to obtain the releases. Refusal by the board member to sign and consent to background checks results in dismissal from the program.
 - Child Abuse Registry (HHS Child Abuse Check)
 - Iowa Child Advocacy Board Form which covers:
 - o Sex Offender Registry Check
 - o Iowa Criminal Record Check with DCI
 - o National Criminal Record Check

5.I. Dismissal of a FCRB Member

Policy

Local board members are dismissed from the FCRB program when the member meets the grounds for removal.

Definition

- 1) Grounds for removal include, but may not be limited to:
 - a) Releasing confidential information pursuant to Iowa Code sections 600.16, 217.30, 235A.15, 237.21, chapters 21 and 22 and other statutory provisions requiring confidentiality.
 - b) Any action or behavior that is inconsistent with the purpose and objectives of Iowa Code sections 237.15 to 237.22, Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 489, or the policies of the FCRB program.
 - c) Failure to notify the ICAB office of any criminal charges filed against them or if there is a pending investigation.
 - d) Refusal to sign and consent to background checks as requested.
 - e) Failure to successfully pass background checks as outlined in 5.C. Screening Process in the FCRB Program Staff Policy and Procedure manual.

Procedure

- 1) ICAB staff will consult with the FCRB deputy administrator when concerns arise regarding potential grounds for removal of a local board member. The FCRB deputy administrator will consult the coordinator if the concern is reported from someone else. An appropriate course of action will be determined.

- a) ICAB staff will document information related to the relevant grounds for dismissal and upload it to the volunteer's record in ICAB's data system.
- b) When dismissal is determined to be the appropriate course of action, the Deputy Administrator will communicate the issues to the volunteer and provide written notice that the person's term on the board is ended effective immediately.
- 2) A dismissed volunteer can contact the ICAB administrator to grieve the decision.
 - a) The administrator shall review the information and make a final determination.
 - b) The administrator shall provide a written decision to the dismissed volunteer.
- 3) All documentation regarding concerns related to grounds for dismissal and written decisions must be stored in the volunteer's record in ICAB's data system.

Section 6: Board Safety

Purpose

To ensure FCRB facilitators and volunteers are able to fulfill their role in environments free from physical, verbal, and psychological violence and threats of violence.

Affected Persons

Contract facilitators, local board members, and all persons who attend foster care review board meetings.

Policy

The Iowa Child Advocacy Board promotes a culture of safety for facilitators and local board members. ICAB encourages safe practices that include, but are not limited to, setting up meeting spaces so people can exit easily in potentially violent situations, holding meetings in facilities with secure entrance where available, restricting access to objects that may be used as weapons and having a fully charged mobile phone available during the meeting for emergencies.

FCRB facilitators and volunteers receive board safety education through the pre-service training curriculum and ongoing in-service sessions. Board safety training can include skill building in risk assessment, risk reduction, and verbal de-escalation techniques.

Procedure

In the event an incident occurs during a foster care review board meeting, the following steps shall be taken:

- 1) The facilitator uses verbal de-escalation techniques to reduce the risk.
- 2) If a situation escalates, direct the individual to leave.
- 3) Contact the police if any party feels they or others are in imminent danger.
- 4) The facilitator shall notify the coordinator as soon as possible following the incident.
- 5) The facilitator documents the incident in the FCRB report.

Prior Notice: In the event someone notifies the local FCRB office of the potential that an interested party may become verbally or physically aggressive at a review meeting and request police presence, the FCRB staff shall:

- 1) Direct the individual making the request for police presence to arrange this with law enforcement.
- 2) Notify the FCRB facilitator and local board members of the potential risk so they can take precautions.

- 3) Law enforcement shall not be present during the review but may be on the premises for the duration of the review.

Facilitator or Board raise concerns: In the event the FCRB facilitator or a local board member contacts the coordinator or administrative assistant with concerns about the risk for a potentially escalated situation based on documentation in the case file, the administrative assistant shall:

- 1) Contact the HHS case manager for more information.
- 2) Share the information with the coordinator and consult about whether police need to be present.
- 3) If the decision is made to request police presence, the administrative assistant shall contact the local law enforcement office to arrange police presence per the local law enforcement protocol.

Interested Parties: In the event an interested party presents at the review and is suspected to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances, the following steps shall be taken:

- 1) The facilitator consults with those interested parties who are present to assess the individual's ability to participate in the review.
- 2) If it is determined the individual cannot reasonably participate in the review, then the person shall be offered the option of making a statement to the local board before leaving. The board report shall include the individual's presence, statement if given and documentation that the facilitator asked the individual to leave due to suspicion of being under the influence of some substance.
- 3) If it is determined the individual can reasonably participate in the review, then the board will follow the prior safety procedures if needed.
- 4) If during the review it is made known that the individual is under the influence, the board report shall reflect the information that was reported.

Section 7: FCRB Review Process

Purpose

ICAB is committed to providing a standardized, quality review process, where funded, for children in foster care placements. Pursuant to Iowa Code §237.19, “The state board shall establish local citizen foster care review boards to review cases of children receiving foster care. The department shall discontinue its foster care review process for those children reviewed by local boards as local boards are established and operating.”

Affected Persons

Iowa Child Advocacy Board staff, contract facilitators, and local board members

7.A. Initiation of Case

Policy

Upon receipt of information regarding a child in foster care, administrative staff shall initiate a case record in ICAB’s FCRB database to track and monitor the case through the FCRB process until case dismissal.

Procedure

- 1) FCRB staff will receive a monthly report from HHS central office that contains a complete listing of children in **paid** foster care placement.
- 2) FCRB staff shall review the list and identify new cases and discharges.
- 3) **New cases:**
 - a) **Local staff prepares and files a proposed order on EDMS requesting to be indexed to the case.**
 - b) **Local staff creates a case record in ICAB’s data system for each new child eligible for a foster care review. See CAMS User Guide: Entering a new case**
 - c) **Local staff will schedule a review date that aligns with the next court date whenever possible.**
- 4) Local staff will discharge cases of children no longer in foster care. See CAMS User Guide: Closing a case

Resources: CAMS User Guide: Entering a new case and Closing a case

7.B. Preparation for and Scheduling of Reviews

Policy

Administrative staff shall prepare and schedule timely reviews for children in out-of-home placements. Pursuant to Iowa Code §237.20, “The timing and frequency of a review of each

case by a local board shall take into consideration the permanency goals, placement setting, and frequency of any court reviews of the case.”

Procedure

- 1) ICAB staff will follow the DIA-HHS Memorandum of Understanding exhibit that outlines the priority case selection criteria when scheduling reviews.
- 2) The AA shall create a projected list at 45 calendar days prior to review day and provide the list to the HHS supervisor and/or case managers to obtain updated information about the children projected to be reviewed. See *CAMS User Guide: FCRB Reviews Report*
 - a) Check the FCRB Caseload Dashboard at least once a month to verify that all active children have an upcoming review date entered.
 - b) If the review date column is blank that means the case is showing as Active but no next review date entered.
 - c) If there is a past (old) review date, that likely means the next review date was not entered or there is a typo in the date.
 - d) The dashboard should only be showing review dates for the current month forward.
- 3) Thirty-five (35) calendar days prior to a foster care review, Iowa Child Advocacy Board personnel shall follow-up with the HHS supervisor and/or case managers to confirm the tentative foster care review schedule.
- 4) The AA shall finalize and distribute the agenda 30 calendar days prior to review.
 - a) All boards will have designated start and end times. **The AA shall take into consideration number of reviews, permanency status, sibling groups and no-contact orders when scheduling reviews.**
 - i) A typical review is scheduled for 40 minutes. An increase or decrease in the length of a typical review shall be determined by the case type, complexity of the case, number of children involved in the case and whether interpreter services are required. Local staff will consult with HHS, attorney of the person who needs the interpreter service and/or the service provider to determine if an interpreter will be needed. If the person is not able to attend the review, an interpreter is not needed.
 - ii) Reviews where the child is placed on a trial home visit or where termination of parental rights has occurred should be scheduled at the end of the board meeting to minimize schedule changes, if needed.
 - iii) Youth aged 14+ years require their own review time as they are invited to reviews and receive a copy of the report. The report should not contain information about siblings so as to protect the confidentiality of sibling information.

- b) Siblings under age 14, even when placed in different levels of care, can be reviewed in the same time frame with one report issued for the review.
- c) At least ten minutes between reviews is scheduled into the review day to allow for board debrief and prep between case reviews.
 - i) Each case is assigned a board member as the lead questioner (LQ) who will remain the LQ for the duration of the child's assignment to the board, if possible.
 - ii) Time for continuing education is included six times per calendar year. The FCRB training schedule is provided by the state office.
- d) Cases with a no-contact order:
 - i) Individual youth/sibling cases in which the court has issued a "No Contact" order between parents will require separate slots and separate FCRB Reports that reflect only information related to the specific parent;
 - ii) If the "No Contact" order is between the child and parent(s), the AA schedules a review slot for the youth separate from the parents. The AA invites HHS, GAL, provider(s), placement and any provider working with the child to the child's review. When a case has a no contact order between the child and parent(s), the AA shall consult with the FCRB Coordinator (FCRB Program Manager, if coordinator is not available) for scheduling and report distribution. Note: the agenda may include a time buffer between reviews where no contact is ordered.
- e) The AA will distribute the agenda to the following persons by email 30 calendar days prior to the review:
 - i) HHS case manager
 - ii) HHS supervisor
 - iii) County Attorney
 - iv) Judge
 - v) Facilitator
 - vi) Coordinator
- f) **Agendas are stored in the CAB Administrative shared drive.**
- 4) The AA will verify information pertaining to cases is correct and ensure receipt of all information.
- 5) The AA will send notification of the review to all interested parties 21 calendar days prior to the review. All notices shall include a statement that the person notified has the right to representation by counsel at the review.
 - a) Whenever possible, the AA will send the notification by email to interested parties who are required to meet the same confidentiality requirements as ICAB staff and volunteers. To email these interested parties, copy the body of the notice and paste it into the body of the email. Add the child's name, date of review, time of review and location. *See Email FCRB Notification template in the FCRB P&P Resources folder.*

- b) When an email address is not available for an interested party, the AA will send the notice by regular mail.
- c) In addition to the parties listed under 3.e. above, the AA will send notices to:
 - i) Parent or parents of the child unless termination of parental rights has occurred;
 - a) Legal fathers are invited if their current location is known.
 - b) Putative fathers can be invited when there is a court order appointing them counsel in the matter.
 - ii) Foster care provider of the child;
 - iii) Child receiving foster care if the child is fourteen years of age or older;
 - iv) Guardian ad litem of the foster child.
 - v) Person providing services to the child.
 - a) Service providers, therapists, CASA advocates and coaches are also invited to reviews where applicable as a “person providing services to the child”.
 - b) Parents are responsible for inviting their Parent Partner.
 - vi) Intervenor
 - a) Counsel for an intervenor is provided a courtesy invitation.
- 6) When an interested party or board member requests to be present virtually, the following procedures are followed:
 - a) Schedule a Google Meet link for the review time slot.
 - b) Invite the facilitator and IP to the calendar invite.
 - c) Email the IP the link so they have it as an alternative to the calendar invite and include the link for the online consent form.
 - d) It is helpful to add the Google Meet link to the agenda as a reminder to the facilitator that they will need to start the Google Meet for the review.
 - e) Send the consent form link to the person who requested the virtual option. *The consent forms are good for a year so if a board member routinely has to participate virtually or is utilized as a virtual sub throughout the year, they only need to sign one consent form per year.*
- 7) When there is a high probability that an interpreter is needed for an interested party, the AA will check the interpreter roster and secure someone to provide the service.
 - a) Each interpreter on the roster is classified A, B or C. ICAB will pay the same rate as their classification.
 - b) Prepare an Interpreter Invoice and also provide a Substitute W9 form if the person is providing the service for the first time for ICAB. The W9 is needed for payment.
 - c) If no one is available to provide in-person or virtual interpreter services, the alternative option is Language link over-the-phone translation service. DIA-ICAB has an account. Refer to the Language Link instructional kit for more information. The

first page provides instructions on how to access the service and the account information.

- 8) The AA will prepare and ensure distribution of the following documents for review day for completion by the facilitator, local board members and interested parties:
 - a) Interested Party lists (who was invited to the review)
 - o Export the Interested Party list from the Interested Party Dashboard in ICAB's data system. See CAMS user guide for further instruction.
 - b) Facilitator Invoice
 - c) Chair Meeting Summary
 - d) Facilitator Summary
 - e) FCRB Tracking Sheet for Hours and Miles
 - f) Comment Cards
 - g) Lead Questioner Notes and Review Guide
 - h) Confidentiality Form & Release Forms
 - i) Continuing education materials and evaluation forms when scheduled
- 9) The AA will seek to verify that a quorum is available for an FCRB meeting, by monitoring feedback from Chairperson Summaries, Facilitator Summaries, communication from local board members, and other sources. **A quorum is defined as the majority of local review board members (including sworn in members from other boards) who must be present (in-person or virtually) before cases can be reviewed and recommendations formulated.**

Membership	Members Needed for Quorum
Minimum 5 member Less than 5 members	3
6 or 7 member boards	4

- a) Use of subs to meet quorum requirements:
 - i) Any board member with an *approved* volunteer status can be utilized as a sub to meet quorum requirements and may participate virtually in the reviews.
 - ii) When quorum issues arise, the coordinator will contact other board members from the local program's volunteer pool to find a substitute.
 - Coordinators may find it useful to establish an internal list of board members who are generally willing to fill in as a sub for another board, if they are available.

- iii) If no board member is available from the local program's volunteer pool, the coordinator will enlist the assistance of another local program to find a sub.
 - iv) The coordinator will provide the substitute's contact information to the local administrative assistant.
 - v) The administrative assistant will include the substitute board member on communication and give the person access to the case files for the review day.
 - When CAMS is in use by volunteers: If a volunteer is subbing from another board, the AA will need to make a request to Sherri to have the volunteer's user account updated to include (board name) as an assignment. This is the only way that the volunteer will have access to cases. Once the review is over, the board assignment will need to be ended.
 - b) A request for an exception regarding quorum for 6 and 7 member boards can be made to the Deputy Program Administrator who will assess the situation and make a determination. *It will never be acceptable to have less than 3 members present to hold a review.*
- 10) The facilitator shall arrange to be present for all FCRB meetings, and to prioritize the work of the FCRB review day over other interests. It is expected that the facilitator will schedule vacations and other time off to not interfere with FCRB meetings, as any absences from a review meeting would create a hardship for local board members, families, and ICAB staff. If a situation arises wherein the facilitator must be absent, efforts will be made to hold the meeting utilizing a back-up facilitator. Facilitator absences shall be addressed in the following manner:
- a) Unanticipated absence: If a facilitator has a last-minute emergency which will require the facilitator to either be late for the meeting or absent from the meeting altogether, it is imperative that the facilitator informs the coordinator and AA by direct phone contact as soon as possible. The facilitator arranges to provide the draft FCRB reports to the coordinator and AA. Depending on availability of a substitute, the meeting start time may need to be delayed or the meeting day canceled altogether.
 - b) Anticipated absence: If a facilitator must be absent due to a known situation such as a funeral, the facilitator contacts the coordinator by direct phone contact as soon as the conflict is known, so that options/arrangements for coverage can be discussed.

Resources: Language Link Kit, Facilitator Invoice, Chair Meeting Summary, Facilitator Meeting Summary, FCRB Tracking Sheet for Hours/Miles, Comment Card, Lead Questioner Notes and Review Guide, Confidentiality form and Release form

7.C. Local Board Case Files

Policy

ICAB staff will ensure all case file materials for a local board day are provided to the facilitator and local board members at least 21 days prior to the review day.

Procedure

- 1) Check EDMS for case file documents. Best practice is to check EDMS at least daily and process new information. Not all filings need to be saved for the boards.
 - a) ICAB staff use discretion when downloading documents from EDMS.
 - b) Documents to provide the boards include, if available, but are not limited to:
 - i) Pertinent court orders
 - ii) Service provider reports
 - iii) Most current case permanency plan
 - iv) Social history
 - v) Psychological evaluations
 - vi) Substance abuse evaluations
 - vii) Individualized education plan
 - viii) Most recent drug testing results (six month's worth is not necessary)
 - c) Documents not provided to the board but utilized to update child data records include, but are not limited to:
 - i) Orders changing attorneys
 - ii) Orders rescheduling hearings
 - iii) Orders accepting a case permanency plan
 - iv) Maintenance of exhibits
 - v) Court documents for appearances by attorneys
- 2) Download the above-mentioned (1.b.) documents from EDMS and store them in the corresponding child's folder in the Google CAB Administrative Team Shared Drive folder.
- 3) Upload documents to the data system for each review > Events > Foster Care Review Board Meeting > Upload Documents.
- 4) In addition to uploading documents to the Event, some key case file materials shall be uploaded to the Case > Documents section for ease of access by facilitators and board members:
 - a) Permanency court order (extension, TPR, APPLA, guardianship, etc)
 - b) No contact order
 - c) Most current case permanency plan
 - i) Delete the old CPP from the Documents section
 - d) Social history
 - e) Psychological evaluations

- f) Individualized education plan
 - i) Delete the old IEP from the Documents section
- 5) Once the documents are in the data system, there is no reason to maintain them in the Google CAB Administrative Team Shared Drive folder. Follow retention policies for case and child records.

7.D. Conduct of the Review

Policy

A local board shall, except in delinquency cases, do the following:

1. Review the case of each child receiving foster care assigned to a local board **in accordance with written protocols adopted pursuant to Iowa Code 237.16, subsection 4**, to determine whether satisfactory progress is being made toward the goals of the case permanency plan pursuant to section 237.22. The timing and frequency of a review of each case by a local board shall take into consideration the permanency goals, placement setting, and frequency of any court reviews of the case.

a. During each review, the agency responsible for the placement of or services provided to the child shall attend the review and the local board shall review all of the following:

(1) The past, current, and future status of the child and placement as shown through the case permanency plan and case progress reports submitted by the agency responsible for the placement of the child and other information the board may require.

(2) The efforts of the agency responsible for the placement of the child to locate and provide services to the **child's biological or adoptive parents, legal guardians, or fictive kin providing the majority of a child's daily food, lodging, and support**.

(3) The efforts of the agency responsible for the placement of the child to facilitate the return of the child to the home or to find an alternative permanent placement other than foster care if reunion with the parent or previous custodian is not feasible. The agency shall report to the board all factors that either favor or mitigate against a decision or alternative with regard to these matters.

(4) Any problems, solutions, or alternatives which may be capable of investigation, or other matters with regard to the child which the agency responsible for the placement of the child or the board feels should be investigated with regard to the best interests of the state or of the child.

(5) The compliance of the interested parties with the decision-making rights and responsibilities contained in the family foster care or pre-adoptive care agreement applicable to a child.

Procedure: Refer to the Appendix 1: Facilitator Handbook for complete procedural steps on how to conduct a review.

7.E. Post Review Activities

Policy

FCRB staff and facilitators shall complete reports and post-review paperwork according to deadlines specified in the procedures.

Procedure

- 1) Board reports
 - a) Facilitator will complete and submit draft reports to the assigned FCRB editor within five (5) calendar days of review day.
 - b) The FCRB editor will review the draft report with the facilitator and the facilitator will correct or edit the report as directed and return the corrected copy to the FCRB editor within two (2) working days.
 - c) Upon receipt of the corrected report, the FCRB editor will repeat the activity in b) above if further corrections are needed. The facilitator will transmit final reports to the AA within 12 calendar days of the review meeting. AA will use information in the data system to check and correct any errors in the report's first portion (regarding dates, juvenile number, review number, next review date, etc.) and the report's final portion (attendees, distribution of report).
 - d) If a facilitator fails to submit any final report within 12 calendar days, the AA shall notify by email the FCRB editor and deputy administrator of each missing report. AA will transmit final reports within 15 calendar days post review.
- 2) Facilitator will submit necessary documentation to the AA within five (5) business days: hours/miles sheets, facilitator and chairperson summaries, comment cards, training evaluations, and invoices.
- 3) Invoice: When applicable, upon receipt of the FCRB editor-approved board reports and all documents listed in paragraph 4, the AA will process the Facilitator Invoice and forward to the state office AA for further processing. Payments are outlined in the annual contracts between ICAB and the facilitator.
- 4) Report Distribution:
 - a) All reports are filed on EDMS according to local procedures.
 - b) Only persons notified of the review will receive a copy of the FCRB report.
 - c) When an Interested Party invited to the review is no longer an active participant in the case when the reports are filed and distributed, best practice is:

- i) not to send a copy of the report if the person did not actively participate in the review;
 - ii) send a copy of the report if the person did participate in the review as they provided information that was included in the report filed with the court.
- 5) Data Tracking
 - a) No later than 15 calendar days after the review, the AA will input the report into the data system (IP attendance, findings, barriers) and set the next review date.
 - b) AA shall process comment cards using the established platform. The comment card link shall be emailed to interested parties who participated virtually.
 - c) AA shall input information into an administrative report and the FCRB dashboard on the shared drive.
- 6) AA shall send the Chairperson and Facilitator Summary Sheets to the coordinator.

7.F. FCRB Meeting Cancellation

Policy

FCRB staff shall assess the need to cancel reviews on a case-by-case basis and follow procedural guidelines when making cancellation decisions. Local offices shall consider a virtual meeting as an alternative to ensure cases are reviewed timely.

Procedure

- 1) Cancellation of individual reviews.
 - a) When a child/group scheduled for review returns home or is adopted prior to the review day, the AA shall remove the child/group from the agenda and revise the agenda accordingly. The revised agenda will be sent to appropriate HHS personnel and the facilitator.
 - b) The AA will send a cancellation notice to interested parties.
 - c) When the review times for other children on the agenda have changed, the AA shall enter the new review times and send new notifications to affected interested parties.
 - d) If the child goes home within 2-3 calendar days of the scheduled review, then the AA shall enter "training" into the vacant slot instead of changing other review times due to short notice.
- 2) Cancellation of FCRB meetings due to inclement weather.
 - a) If inclement weather is predicted that coincides with a board day, the AA shall consult with the coordinator and facilitator to determine if the reviews should be switched to virtual meetings.

- b) For **unforeseen** weather-related issues, the AA shall consult with the coordinator and facilitator to decide about **switching to virtual meetings**, delaying or canceling a board day.
 - c) The AA will immediately notify the members and interested parties about the plan for the reviews.
 - d) The AA will also notify the meeting facility **if the space will not be utilized**.
- 3) Cancellation of FCRB meetings due to meeting facility issues.
 - a) If the facility used for the FCRB meeting is closed on the day of the meeting with little notice, the AA shall consult with the coordinator and facilitator to determine whether another convenient, alternate facility is available. If no facility is available, **consideration should be given to holding the meetings virtually before making a decision to cancel**.
 - b) The coordinator shall inform the AA who will immediately notify the local board members and the interested parties about the plans for reviews.
- 4) Rescheduling a canceled FCRB meeting.
 - a) When a meeting day is canceled, the coordinator shall determine a new date for the reviews to be held after checking with the local board members, meeting location and facilitator about availability. The coordinator shall notify the AA of the new date.
 - b) AA shall update the review modal with the new date and time.
 - c) AA shall revise the agenda and send it to the agenda recipients and local board members, and will send new notifications to interested parties.

7.G. Foster Care Review Board Report Addendums

This is best handled on a case by case basis as the action depends on the nature of the inaccuracy.

- 1) The AA and coordinator will consult on how best to handle information received from an interested party following receipt of a board report.
- 2) Facilitator errors in conveying testimony must be corrected through an addendum that is refiled with the court and sent to interested parties.
- 3) Disagreement by an interested party with what someone else reported at a review does not necessarily constitute an addendum and is better handled by directing the interested party to discuss the matter with the HHS caseworker to ensure those involved have the same understanding of the statement(s) that is in question.

7.H. Foster Care Review Board Data System Maintenance & Reports

Policy

Maintain child case records in the Foster Care Review Board data system on a consistent basis, as the data entered is necessary for the required reports.

Procedure

AA shall process mail/EDMS filings in the data system as it comes in.

- 1) If termination of parental rights occurs, the AA shall update the **Interested Party dashboard by entering an end date for the parent(s) and their attorney(s).**
- 2) AA shall complete a monthly administrative report **and the FCRB Dashboard** on Google Drive by the 5th working day of the following month.
- 3) AA shall **verify the** monthly interested party attendance report **in the data system** and **notify the** deputy administrator for FCRB **when all the data has been entered.** The deputy administrator **enters the interested party attendance information into the FCRB Dashboard.**
- 4) AA shall complete Quarterly IV-E Reports.
- 5) AA shall complete additional reports upon request.

7.I. Foster Care Review Board Leadership

Policy

Each board shall have a facilitator, chairperson, and vice-chair person who work together to provide leadership and guidance to the board members during the review process.

Procedures

- 1) Annually, each FCRB will hold an election for the positions of chairperson and vice chairperson. The facilitator is to preside over the election process as outlined in the FCRB Facilitator Handbook.
- 2) It is important for the facilitator to meet the needs of the local board members and to complete the requirements in the contract with ICAB. To assist with this process, evaluations shall be completed at least annually, and more often as desired by ICAB. The forms used to help compile information are the Member Assessment of Facilitator Services and the Staff Assessment of Facilitator Services. The coordinator reviews the results with the facilitator. This helps maximize performance and satisfaction with the services under contract.

Resources: Member Progress Review, Member Assessment of Facilitator Services, Staff Assessment of Facilitator Services

Section 8: Records

Purpose

To ensure accurate, up-to-date records are maintained for local board members and all children reviewed by a foster care review board.

Affected Persons

Iowa Child Advocacy Board staff, contract facilitators and local board members

8.A. Case Record Management

Policy

Local program staff shall maintain a case record for each child reviewed by a foster care review board.

Procedure

- 1) The FCRB program utilizes the data system to maintain complete, accurate and current records for each case reviewed. Program staff enters case data and records into the data system as prescribed in [Section 7 FCRB Review Procedures](#).
- 2) Local board members may take handwritten notes about information provided for foster care reviews **or utilize the data system to take notes**. Board members must maintain their own notes abiding by security awareness guidelines provided annually.
- 3) A coordinator and AAs are authorized to access electronic records for cases when required to carry out their official duties as described in the respective position description. If authorized by the position description, the staff member may access and download records for the Court's Electronic Data Management System (EDMS) for the purposes of storing the records electronically. They may print copies of the records only as necessary for carrying out their respective duties as described in their job descriptions. An ICAB staff member, contractual facilitator or local board member who is authorized to have handwritten notes of records in their possession shall store those records when not in use in a locked container within a locked storage area which is not accessible to others.
- 4) Upon receiving the final FCRB reports, the AA shall upload the report to EDMS, and provide a copy to the interested parties via email or postal mail if an email address is not available.
- 5) When a local board member discontinues a term on the board, the **administrative assistant will remove the board member's access from any case file documents**.

8.B. Confidentiality of FCRB Records and Data

Policy

All program staff and local board members must respect the child's right to privacy by maintaining the confidentiality of each case record. All data, records and documents collected or created by ICAB or the FCRB are confidential and may be released only in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations and rules. In addition, confidentiality shall be maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ICAB (as an attached unit of the DIA) and the HHS.

Procedure

- 1) Each local board member shall take and sign an Oath of Confidentiality indicating their commitment to maintaining confidentiality of FCRB data and records in accordance with all provisions of this manual.
- 2) ICAB staff, contract facilitators and local board members adhere to Iowa Code Section 237.21 which sets forth specific confidentiality requirements for FCRB records:
- 3) The MOU between DIA (ICAB) and HHS requires that DIA (ICAB) will assure the Confidentiality of the Iowa Child Advocacy Board and the FCRB, as follows
 - a) Iowa Child Advocacy Board and FCRB personnel and local board members who disclose information or records of the Iowa Child Advocacy Board, FCRB, or HHS other than as provided in Iowa Code subsection 237.20(2), may be guilty of a serious misdemeanor.

Protected information includes:

- The names and addresses of applicants and recipients and types of services and amounts of assistance provided (unless excepted under Iowa Code 217.30(4);
 - Information related to the social and economic conditions or circumstances of a particular individual including wage information (see Iowa Code Section 217.30) obtained from the agency administering the state unemployment compensation laws or from the Social Security Administration;
 - Agency evaluation of information about a particular individual;
 - Medical or psychiatric data, including diagnosis and past history of disease or disability, concerning a particular individual; and
 - Child abuse information as defined in Iowa Code Section 235.13.
- b) In the event of the issuance of a subpoena for HHS records or for an Iowa Child Advocacy Board or FCRB representative to testify regarding the client, the Iowa Child Advocacy Board or FCRB will call the Court's attention through the Attorney General to the federal and state law provisions against release of information.
 - c) The same policies and procedures will be applied for requests from government bodies, the courts, or a law enforcement official as with any other outside source.

- d) Procedures for safeguarding information apply to computer system data as well as any copies of foster care administrative review files.
 - e) In accordance with Iowa Code Section 217.30, Iowa Child Advocacy Board and FCRB personnel have no independent authority to release confidential data other than as required by Iowa Code.
- 4) Subpoenas. A subpoena is a writ, generally issued by a court, to compel testimony or evidence. The case records and information made available to local board members, facilitators, and staff is privileged and confidential per Iowa code. In the event that a subpoena is issued with regard to the FCRB program:
- a) Immediately bring the subpoena to the attention of the ICAB administrator or deputy administrator, and provide a copy.
 - b) Do not respond to, contact or discuss the matter with the issuing/serving party without further guidance.
 - c) The ICAB program has legal counsel available to provide guidance to local board members, coordinators and administration throughout the subpoena process. A motion to quash (make null and void) the subpoena will likely be filed on behalf of FCRB. Should other steps be required, specific guidance will be provided.
- 5) Violation of confidentiality rules and policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal for the FCRB program.

8.C. Local Board Member Records

Policy

The FCRB program maintains a record for each local board member that may be reviewed by the member with the exception of confidential reference documentation and record checks.

Procedure

- 1) Coordinators will maintain an electronic volunteer record for each local board member using ICAB's data system. Consult the CAMS User Guide: FCRB Volunteer Management for procedures.
 - a) Each local board member shall have name and contact information and other required information entered in ICAB's data system. Program staff updates this information as needed.
 - b) If the individual also serves as a CASA advocate, a separate CAMS record/account needs to be created and maintained for the FCRB member role.
 - The volunteer's application needs to be entered into CAMS and processed the same as any application to serve.

- 2) The FCRB member record in ICAB's data system contains, at minimum:
- a) Application with emergency contact information and employment history
 - b) Confidential reference documentation (3 references)
 - ICAB staff completes reference check information by entering the verification date and any notes for each of the references.
 - Reference responses are uploaded to the Reference Check section of the Application Dashboard.
 - c) Current background check results and next due date (every 4 years)
 - Background checks are completed every four years from the initial checks.
 - Personnel from the ICAB state office emails the release forms to the volunteers for signature using Adobe docusign software.
 - Volunteers can sign the documents electronically for quicker turnaround.
 - Volunteers may request the state office mail the releases, if preferred.
 - Current passed background checks need to be on file in order for a volunteer to continue serving on a local board.
 - d) Documentation of personal interview
 - The coordinator documents the interview with the prospective volunteer and uploads the document to the Interview section of the Application Dashboard.
 - If the applicant is a prior or current CASA or coach, an FCRB interview must be completed.
 - e) Oath date and a copy of the FCRB Confidentiality Oath uploaded to documents
 - f) Confidentiality agreement from board observation uploaded to documents
 - g) Training records to include pre-service and continuous education
 - h) Signed Member Policy & Procedures Acknowledgement
 - i) Progress Review completed for each term of service and next due date (every 4 years)
 - j) Resignation or dismissal documentation
 - k) Exit Survey

- 3) Closing a local board member record:
 - a) Program staff updates the CAMS Volunteer Status to “Exited Program” with the date of exit when a local board member leaves the program.
 - b) Program staff uploads the written documentation of a resignation or voluntary and/or involuntary dismissal of a member to the volunteer record in CAMS.
 - c) The local board member is invited to complete an exit survey that staff maintains in the member’s electronic record.

Resources: CAMS User Guide for FCRB Data Entry, ICAB Application (if not completed on line), FCRB Interview and Guide, FCRB Confidentiality Oath, Confidentiality agreement for board observation, Member P&P Acknowledgement form, FCRB Program Exit Survey

8.D. Use of Technology

Policy

Staff, contract facilitators, and local board members shall complete the annual Security Awareness Training curriculum. Reasonable precautions are taken to guard confidentiality when using technology such as email, electronic and social media sites, computers, and cell phones.

Procedure

- 1) Staff, contract facilitators, and local board members will install passwords on any device they use for FCRB business and on any files containing information related to FCRB business.
 - a) Passwords shall not be provided to or shared with any other person.
 - b) Do not save autofill passwords on any device that may be used by someone else.
- 2) Contract facilitators and local board members will complete the annual Security Awareness training provided by the FCRB program staff.
- 3) AAs will document completion of the Security Awareness training in CAMS so it becomes part of the local board member’s training record.
- 4) AAs will provide the contract facilitator’s completed knowledge check to the FCRB Deputy Administrator who will store the documentation in the personnel file.
- 5) Coordinators will ensure all local board members complete the annual Security Awareness training module.

8.E. Statistical Data

Policy

ICAB staff shall maintain complete case and volunteer data for program reporting requirements.

8.F. Record Retention and Destruction

Policy

ICAB office staff adhere to the DIA-HHS MOU retention schedule for Foster Care Review Board records for children reviewed by local boards which states that “for children whom a review has been conducted, the Iowa Child Advocacy Board and LFCRB foster care review working files shall be destroyed five (5) years after the child reaches majority age.” Working file is defined as the case record maintained in the foster care review board database.

All other copies of case file materials, stored outside of the ICAB data system, will be deleted after each foster care review.

Procedure

- 1) Following each review, delete the child’s case file materials from any electronic folder. Documents are maintained in ICAB’s data system.
- 2) For case file documents stored in electronic folders prior to May 2022, ensure the electronic files are deleted one year post-adoption or one year post-majority age.
- 3) FCRB data system case records (the working files) must be maintained until children reach 23 years of age.
 - a) AAs will conduct a child search in the data system at least once a year to identify persons who have reached the age of 23. Best practice is to do this process quarterly.
 - b) Check the child record to see if it is also linked to an inactive CASA case.
 - i) If linked to a CASA case, then only delete the FCRB Case for the child, not the child record.
 - ii) CASA cases and child records are retained until seven (7) years after the case closes.
 - c) If the child record is only linked to a closed FCRB Case, then delete the child record and FCRB case record from the data system.